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ABSTRACT

This report provides policymakers with information necessary to demonstrate that postsecondary education is an effective route from poverty to true self-sufficiency and prosperity for low-income women. It discusses the impact of the 1996 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) statute and the TANF reauthorization bill, the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act. Six sections look at "Introduction: The Current Policy Climate"; "The Impact of TANF Since 1996: Declining College Enrollments and Increasing Poverty"; "Federal Welfare Policy Since 1988: Welfare Reform before TANF"; "The Social and Economic Benefits of Postsecondary Education"; "The Role of Colleges and Universities"; and "State Leadership in TANF Implementation." The paper concludes with a state-by-state summary of postsecondary education provisions (TANF implementation laws and administrative actions). (Contains 53 references.) (SM)

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From Poverty to Self-Sufficiency: The Role of Postsecondary Education in Welfare Reform

Center for Women Policy Studies
2002

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From Poverty to Self-Sufficiency: The Role of Postsecondary Education in Welfare Reform

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Preface

The Center for Women Policy Studies has been promoting postsecondary education as essential to true welfare reform since 1988 – utilizing policy analysis, convenings, research, and testimony before Congress and the Administration.

Our work has been extensive. We conducted a policy seminar in 1988 on occupational segregation and its roots in education, which resulted in the Westview Press book, *Women, Work, and School: Occupational Segregation and the Role of Education* (Wolfe, 1991); three chapters addressed the issue of postsecondary education as a viable route to economic self-sufficiency for women welfare recipients (Nettles, 1991; Gittell, 1991; Kates, 1991a).

We also conducted a seminar on increasing access to higher education for low income women, co-sponsored by the American Council on Education. In addition, the Center co-sponsored the "Welfare and the College Option" conference in September of 1999.

We have published an array of research and policy analyses, including: *More Than Survival: Access to Higher Education for Low Income Women* (Kates, 1991b); *Women, Welfare, and Higher Education: A Selected Annotated Bibliography* (Kates, 1992); *Reforming Our Thinking on Welfare: Strategies for State Action* (1996); *Getting Smart About Welfare* (1996, 1998); the *Getting Smart About Welfare Action Kit for State Legislators* (1999a); and a **Research and Data in Brief** report of our qualitative research with TANF recipients enrolled in college, *"Clipping Our Wings": The Impact of Welfare Reform on the College Aspirations of Low Income Women* (2001).

The Center testified before Congress and the White House Task Force on Welfare Reform during the legislative debate over "ending welfare as we know it" in 1995-1996. We made impassioned, research-based pleas for inclusion of postsecondary education as an allowable work activity – which failed to persuade either the Clinton Administration or the Congress.

Since passage of the *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* statute in 1996, we have worked closely with women state legislators who participate in the Center's **Contract with Women of the USA State Legislators Initiative** on TANF implementation in their states. We have made presentations to state legislators at National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) annual meetings and have prepared materials for state legislators – including a series of *State Legislators' Action Alerts* and a detailed analysis of the final TANF regulations (1999b).

During 2002, in partnership with the National Education Association (NEA), the Center conducted a **Congressional Briefing on Postsecondary Education as an Effective Welfare Reform Strategy**, co-hosted by Congresswomen Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink (D-HI), and the late Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN). At the briefing, state legislators – Representative Dora Olivo of Texas, Senator Katherine Wells Wheeler of New Hampshire, and Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles of Washington – discussed their efforts to ensure that TANF recipients have access to postsecondary education in their states.

At the July 2002 annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Center and the National Education Association (NEA) convened a **Legislative Exchange on TANF Implementation** at which state legislators discussed the status of TANF reauthorization in Congress and strategies for ensuring recipients' access to postsecondary

education in their states. In November, we convened our first state **Legislative Exchange** at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, hosted by state Representative Mary Jo McGuire. We are planning additional **Legislative Exchanges**, on access to college for low income women, for state legislators, advocates, and researchers during 2003.

We are especially grateful to the National Education Association for its generous financial support of the Center's policy work on TANF and postsecondary education during 2002 and for the partnership our two organizations have developed to address these key issues for low income women, children and communities.

We continue to hope that federal and state policy makers will come to appreciate the importance of providing postsecondary education to TANF recipients if we wish to ensure both their economic self-sufficiency and the economic stability of our nation. This report provides policy makers with the data and information they will need to demonstrate to their colleagues that postsecondary education is an effective route from poverty to true self-sufficiency – and prosperity – for low income women.

Leslie R. Wolfe
President
Center for Women Policy Studies

December 2002

Introduction – The Current Policy Climate

"The question I like to ask every child I visit in the classroom is: 'Are you going to college?' In this great country, we expect every child regardless of how he or she is raised, to go to college. That's the goal we want every child to have" (Bush, 2001).

"A good education is key to unlocking the promise of today's economy in the 21st century. Without it, people are at an ever-increasing risk of falling behind" (Clinton, 1995).

"We must make two years of college – the 13th and 14th years of education – as universal for young Americans as the first 12 are today. And, we must make college affordable for all Americans (Clinton, 1997).

Education has always been a hallmark of the American dream. Since the founding of this nation and its system of public education – which includes public land grant colleges and universities – a college education has been a traditional route to lasting economic self-sufficiency and social mobility in the United States.

Yet despite the inspiring policy pronouncements of both Presidents Clinton and Bush, our nation has not extended this commitment to educational opportunity to women recipients of *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. Indeed, recent federal policy has placed welfare recipients in a class by themselves – denied the opportunities to pursue this traditional avenue of upward mobility. Nonetheless, to succeed in the workplace of the 21st century, virtually every American will need some postsecondary education – which 80 percent of the jobs of the future will require (National Governors Association, 2001a; US Department of Labor, 1999; see Weisbrot, 1997).

The TANF reauthorization bill passed by the House of Representatives in May, 2002 – *the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act* – would increase the work requirement for TANF recipients from 20 to 40 hours per week and also would require states to ensure that 70 percent of their TANF recipients are engaged in work activities – up from 50 percent in the 1996 law. This bill, which mirrors President Bush's proposal, explicitly excludes postsecondary education as an allowable work activity, thus eliminating the flexibility afforded states under the 1996 law and its implementing regulations (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999b).

The House of Representatives thus ignored the pleas of governors and state legislators, whose reauthorization proposals urged Congress to retain the state flexibility they require to meet the needs both of their low income residents and their economy (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002; National Governors Association, 2001b). In fact, the majority of current state TANF programs that allow postsecondary education would become impossible to implement if the provisions of the 2002 House bill become law (Strawn, 2002).

In contrast, prior to the November 2002 election, the Senate Finance Committee passed a bill, the *Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility for Kids Act*, that would require TANF recipients to work 30 hours per week and would allow states to count some form of postsecondary education as an allowable work activity, as all but one have done under the current TANF law. The Senate did not act on this bill before the election. Instead, Congress, acting in a November lame duck session, extended the current law to January 11, 2003, while allowing states to draw down TANF funds through March 31, 2003. The new Congress therefore will be responsible for reauthorizing TANF in 2003.

The Impact of TANF Since 1996 – Declining College Enrollments and Increasing Poverty

As welfare rolls are slashed and states face financial crises, women TANF recipients now more than ever require programs that will help them work their way out of poverty and into the middle class. And for many women, this means postsecondary education. This is especially true for more than half (56 percent) of women receiving public assistance who are high school graduates, have earned GEDs, or have attended some college (Loprest and Zedlewski, 1999).

Since the enactment of the TANF program in 1996, however, recipients' college participation rates have plummeted. The National Urban League's analysis of data from the 1997 and 1999 waves of the Urban Institute's *National Survey of America's Families* found a 20 point drop in college enrollment of welfare recipients, as compared to other low income women (Cox and Spriggs, 2002).

Studies in several states reflect similar distressing findings. For instance, enrollment of welfare recipients at the City University of **New York** (CUNY) dropped by 77 percent – from 22,000 in 1996 to 5,000 in 2000 (Applied Research Center, 2001). And between 1995 and 1997, **Massachusetts**' 15 community colleges reported an average decrease in the enrollment of welfare recipients of 46 percent (Kates, 1998).

In **Michigan**, the number of welfare recipients attending college declined drastically, according to a survey of financial aid officers at seven colleges. One college, for example, reported a 60 percent decrease in retention of students during the 1997-1998 academic year alone and other colleges reported similar declines of up to 50 percent of students receiving public assistance (Kahn and Polakow, 2000). The **Michigan** study also reported that students who persisted in their educational pursuits faced increasing obstacles in the TANF era, including caseworker harassment or ignorance about their right to pursue further education, improper denials of child care subsidies, and random and arbitrary cuts in benefits (Kahn and Polakow, 2000; also see Coalition for Independence Through Education, 2002).

A study of TANF recipients attending college in the **Washington, DC** metropolitan area found that the TANF "work first" ideology, coupled with the five year lifetime limit for assistance, was the most significant barrier to women's educational attainment (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001). And a study of 20 college access and support programs across the country found that having to balance work requirements with educational aspirations resulted in a "marked decline in the number of welfare recipients who participated in recent years" (Marx, 2002, page 2).

TANF's much-touted success – defined solely as reductions in the welfare rolls – hides a tragic reality. Even though states report decreased numbers of TANF recipients, many of those who left TANF for work are not employed in jobs that will lead to economic stability for themselves and their families and instead remain in poverty. In fact, a national study of recipients who left TANF in 1997 and 1999 found that half (52 percent) of women who left welfare in 1999 remained in poverty. Further, 22 percent of women who left TANF returned to cash assistance and the former TANF recipients who were employed earned a median hourly wage of $7.15 (Loprest, 2001).

Indeed, the National Conference of State Legislatures found that former TANF recipients in 18 states earned an average of $7.41 per hour (Jarchow, 2002). Further, studies on the impact of TANF in the midwestern states of **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** found that former TANF recipients earned poverty level wages; the income of a woman with one child was slightly above the poverty line, while the wages of a woman with two children was well below the poverty line (Joyce Foundation, 2002). Similarly, former TANF recipients in **West Virginia** earn a median wage of $5.35 per hour (Dilger, Blakely, Latimer, Locke, Mencken, Plein, Pottter, and Williams, 2001).

Finally, the emphasis on the decrease in the number of TANF recipients masks **the persistence of former recipients' unemployment**. Indeed, "a little over one third" of women who left TANF nationwide were employed in all four quarters of their first post-TANF year (Moffit, 2001, page 2). Between 25 percent and 40 percent of these former recipients in some parts of the country were not working at all – and up to 18 percent had not had any work for a year after leaving TANF (Moffitt, 2001), suggesting that economic downturns are most devastating for those who are least able to survive in the absence of a social safety net.

In contrast, **former TANF recipients with a college education** are more likely to stay employed and less likely to return to TANF for any length of time (see Smith, Deprez and Butler, 2002; Martinson and Strawn, 2002; Richardson, 2001). In **Oregon,** for instance, former TANF and food stamp recipients who left those programs from 1998 to 2000 with higher levels of education also had higher rates of employment and lower rates of poverty. The authors report that the proportion of study participants who were employed "climbed significantly with at least some college education" (Acker, Morgren, Heath, Barry, Gonzales and Weigt, 2001, page 41). Only 52 percent of former TANF recipients with less than a high school diploma were employed at the end of the two year study, compared to 71 percent of those with a high school diploma and 74 percent of

those with at least some college; nearly all (90 percent) of former TANF recipients with a bachelor's degree were employed (Acker, Morgren, Heath, Barry, Gonzales and Weigt, 2001). Similarly, participants in a pilot program that allowed TANF recipients to attend Baltimore City Community College in **Maryland** and count their attendance as an allowable work activity under TANF were "three times less likely to return" to the welfare rolls after graduating than were former recipients who had not participated in the program (Family Welfare Research and Training Group, 2002, page 26).

Despite the evidence that postsecondary education is an effective welfare reform strategy that will help women move from poverty to economic self-sufficiency, and despite the fact that most states allow TANF recipients to participate in some form of postsecondary education, relatively few women are encouraged to do so. For example, data from the **Illinois** Department of Human Services' Bureau of Research and Analysis indicate that as of March 2002, only 668 TANF recipients were enrolled in postsecondary education programs (personal communication, Bureau of Research and Analysis, Illinois Department of Human Services, December 3, 2002). Less than one percent of **Georgia**'s TANF recipients (46 clients) were enrolled in college programs as of September 2001, as were only 6 percent of **Vermont**'s TANF recipients (350 clients) (Mayfield, 2001).

These data suggest that policy makers, advocates, and researchers must work in partnership with state and local welfare agencies to ensure that both caseworkers and recipients are aware of their educational options – and that TANF recipients are offered the opportunity to participate in postsecondary education.

Federal Welfare Policy Since 1988 – Welfare Reform Before TANF

Our nation has traditionally attempted to help certain of its citizens to achieve the American dream through social welfare policies. Consider the success of the **GI bill**, which brought scores of men into college and the middle class after World War II and subsequent wars. Low income women today – and their children – deserve no less.

Congress recognized this commitment in its earlier welfare reform law – the *Family Support Act of 1988*. Indeed, passage of the *Family Support Act (FSA)* marked a shift toward greater recognition of the need to invest in human capital and to include postsecondary education as an option for women receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Like TANF, the *Family Support Act of 1988* was designed to make welfare a temporary system. But unlike TANF, the *Family Support Act* explicitly promoted education and training for long term economic self-sufficiency. Under the law's *Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS)* program, states could offer postsecondary education to AFDC recipients as a job training option and also could adopt a two year or four year college option.

Every state took advantage of this option. Two thirds of the states allowed AFDC recipients to pursue four year college degrees and some states even developed strategies to actively encourage recipients to enroll in college; the remaining states permitted recipients the choice of a two year degree. In this policy environment, colleges developed programs for women receiving AFDC, many of whom proved to be accomplished and successful students (Gittell, Vandersall, Holdaway, and Newman, 1996; see Kates, 1991b).

But this short-lived federal program – and the college option – came to an end with the passage of the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*, which converted AFDC into the *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* block grant to the states.

The final **TANF implementing regulations**, however, issued by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in April of 1999, did not explicitly define "work activity," thus leaving states the flexibility and discretion to define each of the work activities allowed. Further, the preamble to the work requirements provisions specifically states that postsecondary education can fit within the definition of one or more of the 12 allowable work activities. This preamble also extensively discusses the importance of educational activities and encourages states to adopt programs that take advantage of existing educational opportunities (preamble 64 FR 17776-83, as cited in Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999b).

Indeed, since 1996, states again have recognized the importance of postsecondary education to low income women striving for self-sufficiency, as **49 states and the District of Columbia** allow some form of postsecondary education for TANF recipients.

The Social and Economic Benefits of Postsecondary Education

The success of such massive federal programs as the **GI bill** and federal **student financial aid** demonstrates how well a college education opens the door to economic self-sufficiency and social mobility. Postsecondary education provides the academic and vocational skills required for better paying jobs that offer health insurance, paid sick and annual leave and other benefits, while also leading to careers that will truly lift women out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency – as taxpayers not beneficiaries.

The importance of postsecondary education in **poverty reduction** cannot be overestimated. Among people living below the federal poverty level, one third (33 percent) have a high school diploma and only 9.3 percent have a college degree (US Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau, 2001).

Our nation's **community colleges**, which traditionally have taken the lead in providing postsecondary education for low income and "non-traditional" students, have a special role to play. Completing a two year degree is an especially powerful antidote to poverty, raising women's income substantially over their earnings with a high school diploma (Kane and Rouse, as cited in Center for Women Policy Studies, 1998).

Indeed, even **one year of postsecondary education** makes a difference for women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. The poverty rate for **African American women** with one year of postsecondary education is 21 percent – less than half of the poverty rate (51 percent) for those who have completed 12 years of school. Among **Latinas**, the change is equally dramatic, as poverty rates drop from 41 to 18.6 percent with one year of postsecondary education. And the poverty rates for **white women** with one year of postsecondary education drop from 22 to 13 percent (Census Bureau Population Survey, as cited in Sherman, 1990).

But women who earn **four year college degrees** increase their annual incomes most significantly – a trend that should benefit women moving from poverty and welfare to upward mobility in the workplace. In 2001, **Latinas** with bachelor's degrees earned a median weekly income of $676, compared to $467 with an associate's degree and $406 with a high school diploma. **African American women** with bachelor's degrees earned a median weekly income of $692, compared to $502 with an associate's degree and $395 with a high school diploma. **White women** with bachelor's degrees earned $744 weekly, compared to $579 with an associate's degree and $453 with a high school diploma (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

While most available research regarding the beneficial impact of a postsecondary education does not specifically provide data on welfare recipients (Mayfield, 2001), the **findings of several recent studies** are persuasive. For example, former TANF recipients who had obtained college degrees through the **Maine** *Parents as Scholars (PaS)* program reported earning average hourly wages of $11.71 and many were employed in salaried positions rather than as hourly workers. Further, 92 percent of the working *Parents as Scholars* graduates reported that their employers offered such benefits as health insurance, paid sick and vacation leave, life insurance, disability insurance, and compensatory time (Smith, Deprez and Butler, 2002).

TANF recipients enrolled in **California** community colleges under the state's *CalWORKS* program "increased their annual earnings by 42 percent after being out of college for one year" (Mathur, Reichle, Wiseley, and Strawn, 2002, page 3). In **Maryland,** former TANF recipients who attended Baltimore City Community College under a pilot project authorized by the state's Department of Human Resources and conducted by the college in cooperation with the Baltimore County Department of Social Services earned significantly more in the year following the program than did former recipients who did not attend school ($12,307 compared to $8,438) (Family Welfare Research and Training Group 2002). A study of 235 TANF recipients who graduated from East Washington University in **Washington** in 1994-95 and 1995-96 found that the "median wage for the graduates was $11.00 per hour" (Karier, 1998, page 3).

Empowering women through postsecondary education has far reaching benefits – and not all of them are financial. Several studies during the past decade have found that postsecondary education not only increases women's income and job security, it also improves their self-esteem, gives them greater self-confidence and feelings of well being, increases their children's educational ambitions, enriches their personal and family lives, and improves their parenting (Gittell, Gross, and Holdaway, 1993; Kates, 1999, 1991a; Kahn and Polakow, 2000; Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001; Lewis, Schacher, and Simon, 2002; Smith, Deprez and Butler, 2002). Participants in the *CalWORKS* program at Laney College in **California** reported positive results in their lives because of college attendance. One participant noted: "As I continue my education, I see that, if given a chance, low income parents will rise up and not have to live in poverty" (Lewis, Schacher, and Simon, 2002, page 18). Surely, their families and communities will continue to reap the benefits of these positive changes for years to come.

It is especially significant that **a woman's college success has an enormous and positive impact on her children** – who are more likely to take education seriously and aspire to go to college themselves (Gittell, Gross, and Holdaway, 1993). In fact, 62 percent of women on welfare and in college in **Illinois** said that their children were proud of them for going to college and 40 percent reported that their children worked harder in school as a result (Gittell, Gross, and Holdaway, 1993). Participants in the **Maine** *Parents as Scholars* program reported that their children's aspirations for themselves rose as a result of their mothers' college attendance (Smith, Deprez and Butler, 2002). And **Washington, DC** area women saw themselves as role models for their children: "I actually make it a habit to bring my report card home and to show my kids what I'm doing. And I said, 'Now I can do it, and you don't have all the responsibilities that I have, I know that you can do it' " (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001, page 6). Indeed, the benefits of attending college extend to other family members as well, as a Women in Community Development program participant in Boston reported: "Since I started school, my mother and sisters have gone back to school. We keep encouraging each other to continue. [W]e are raising a generation of children that expect to get a good education and see the value in that" (Marx, 2002, page 22).

These significant research findings are regularly ignored in the policy arena, despite their importance in crafting strategies to alleviate "child poverty." However, it is clear that **reducing children's poverty** on a large scale is virtually impossible without some effort to lift their parents out of poverty and into secure careers (Savner, Strawn and Greenberg, 2002). It is equally clear that completing a two or four year college degree program is essential. Indeed, the poverty rates for children whose parents did not attend college, or attended but did not graduate, increased by more than 75 percent from 1975 to 1997 (Bennett, Li, Song, and Yang, 1999).

The Role of Colleges and Universities

While federal and state welfare policy must allow recipients to attend college and must count their postsecondary educational pursuits as allowable work activities, colleges and universities also can take steps to create supportive educational environments for their TANF students (see Kates, 1991b).

Financial aid administrators play a key role, and should become knowledgeable about TANF and its requirements so that they can help TANF students negotiate the college experience with a minimum of disruption and bureaucratic delay. Support and assistance from the campus financial aid office, in fact, often determines whether a TANF recipient will be able to stay in school. As one woman noted: "They provide you with the assistance that you need, especially if you're persistent. . . and you make the right connections with the right people" (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001, page 10).

Among other efforts, financial aid administrators should meet regularly with TANF students and also establish relationships with state and local welfare agencies – and caseworkers – for information sharing and problem solving to benefit students. Financial aid administrators and other college leaders can counter some of the negative attitudes expressed by **welfare caseworkers** towards the postsecondary option for their clients. For example, studies in several states have found that many caseworkers do not consider postsecondary education an appropriate option for their clients and may even harass TANF students and subvert their educational goals (Kahn and Polakow, 2000; Kates, 2000, 1999, 1998; Applied Research Center, 2001; Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001). Financial aid administrators also should provide students with accurate and current information on **support services and community resources** and offer students access to **career development and counseling** personnel who understand the concerns and needs of low income students.

Finally, given the **TANF work requirements**, financial aid administrators can ease their TANF students' work, family and school balancing act by offering them opportunities for on-campus internships, employment, and work study that can fulfill TANF requirements (see Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001). Colleges also should create **emergency funds** to provide women with loans and grants for special and unexpected needs and include proposals for **scholarship programs** for low income women in college fundraising activities among alumni and public and private funding sources.

Campus-based supportive services are especially important for TANF recipients – and for other low income women students. And women appreciate their colleges' support: "My school is really good at getting the necessary things that you need – tutoring, helping you with your classes, even financial aid is good – they will do anything to try to keep you in school" (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001). This kind of

supportive environment inspires women and helps them overcome overwhelming obstacles to success.

Colleges should offer such support services as: **child care**, including on-campus facilities and/or referral to nearby agencies that provide child care (Kates, 1991b). Colleges also should provide resources for **transportation**, such as loans for car repair, and referral to agencies that provide reimbursement for mileage or public transportation tokens; on-campus or campus-approved **housing** for women with children; **workshops** about family relations and child development; and, access to community resources available for low income women (Kates, 1991b).

It is encouraging to note that a number of institutions already have programs which provide such an environment, and which can serve as important models (see Kates, 1991b; Center for Women Policy Studies, 1998, 1999a; Mathur, Reichle, Wisely, and Strawn, 2002; Lewis, Schacher, and Simon, 2002; Marx, 2002).

In **Ohio,** for example, the *Single Parents Reaching Out for Unassisted Tomorrows (SPROUT)* Program, a residential program at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, helps single parents to obtain a college degree by providing year round, on-campus housing, assistance with child care, assistance with financial aid, and personal and academic counseling. Each participant is a full time student who juggles family responsibilities along with educational concerns (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999a). The *ACCESS* program at Ohio State University helps low income single parents meet the demands of family and school, providing access to a financial aid counselor, assistance locating housing and child care, including 10 hours of free evening child care per week (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999a).

Two historically Black **Virginia** colleges also provide assistance to low income women. Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville assists students through the *Single Parent Support System (SPSS),* a 12 month residential program that requires full time attendance, including summer school. In addition to housing, the college provides counseling, child care, and seminars on parenting (Saint Paul's College, 2002). Norfolk State University uses federal grant funds from the *Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CAMPUS)* program in the US Department of Education to operate a child care center for single parent students who are enrolled full time (Norfolk State University, personal communication, August 2002). Norfolk State is one of 306 institutions currently funded under this program, which issued its first grants in fiscal year 1999 (US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, September 2002).

In **Massachusetts**, Smith College's *Ada Comstock Scholars* program, established in 1975 and a model for many others, "offers women of non-traditional age and circumstances, including welfare recipients and other low income women, the opportunity to transfer to the school to complete an undergraduate degree" (Smith College, 2002). Program participants may attend college part or full time, may live on or off campus and may or may not receive financial aid, though more than 80 percent do receive financial aid. The program also affords participants access to many support

services, such as preorientation and orientation at the college and academic and career advising (Smith College, 2002).

Similarly, the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development in Boston conducts the *Women in Community Development* program in partnership with both the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and Project Hope. The program provides such services as peer support, academic guidance, job referrals and leadership training to low income students, including TANF recipients (Marx, 2002).

Several states have linked their TANF programs with colleges and universities to provide a variety of support services to TANF recipients who attend college. For example, the *Bridge to Hope* program in **Hawaii** provides support for participants in the state's *First to Work* TANF program who are enrolled at any University of Hawaii campus. *Bridge to Hope* services include help with student employment, financial aid, internships and counseling (Hawaii State Department of Human Services and University of Hawaii, 2001).

In **New York**, the *College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE)* program is a collaboration between the City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Human Resources Family Independence Administration that offers services to recipients of public assistance at 10 of 17 New York City area colleges. These services include referrals to tutoring, social services, counseling and academic advising, monitoring of class attendance, help with job and work-study placements, and troubleshooting regarding child care (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999a).

Maryland launched *Project Impact* in 1999 as a two year program to enable 200 Baltimore City Community College TANF recipients to remain in school and have their education count as an allowable work activity under the state's TANF program. The college and the Baltimore City Department of Social Services coordinate the program, provide supportive services to the students, and monitor their progress. The pilot was extended in 2001 for an additional two years (Family Welfare Research and Training Group, 2002).

State Leadership in TANF Implementation

Since 1996, 49 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation and/or taken administrative actions that open the door to a college education for TANF recipients. While the Center's initial analysis of state actions summarized the efforts of only 19 states (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999a), our 2002 analysis reviewed TANF implementation statutes and programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to determine the full extent of state leadership in allowing TANF recipients to pursue some form of postsecondary education.

Methodology: Center staff contacted state social service agencies, legislative staff, advocates and researchers for updated information on the 19 states included in our earlier study. We also reviewed state agency web sites and spoke with state agency and/or legislative staff for the remaining states. We identified relevant implementing statutes and/or regulations, federal waivers, new or pending legislation, and key provisions of the programs, statutes, and regulations that permit postsecondary education.

Findings: The study's most significant finding is that **49 states and the District of Columbia**, with the sole exception of **Oklahoma,** allow postsecondary education to count as a work activity under TANF. The states have adopted a variety of legislative and administrative strategies to allow access to postsecondary education for TANF recipients – ranging from permitting TANF recipients to enroll only in short term vocational education programs to supporting students who want to complete a four year degree program.

In addition to rules regarding the types of postsecondary programs that states will support, states vary in the amount of time they will allow TANF recipients to participate in these programs and many states require recipients to combine education with other work activities, such as unsubsidized employment, subsidized private or public sector employment, on-the-job training, job search and job readiness assistance and community service.

Eleven states count postsecondary education as a work activity for 12 months – **Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, North Dakota, Texas, Washington,** and **West Virginia**. **Connecticut** only allows postsecondary education to count as work for six months and **Kansas** allows postsecondary education for "less than 12 months."

Fifteen states count postsecondary education as a work activity for 24 months, including **Arizona, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah,** and **Virginia**. Two states allow TANF recipients to participate in postsecondary education for more than 12 months but fewer than 24 months; **Tennessee** counts postsecondary education as a work activity for 16 months while **Oregon** allows 18 months of postsecondary education and training to count as work.

It is significant, given TANF restrictions proposed by both the Bush Administration and the US House of Representatives in 2002, that **19 states and the District of Columbia** allow postsecondary education to count as a TANF allowable work activity for longer than 24 months (**Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont, Wisconsin,** and **Wyoming**).

The majority of states require that TANF recipients' education be directly linked to employment and self sufficiency, by upgrading their skills for the current job market or preparing for occupations that are expected to be in demand, for example.

Five states and the District of Columbia use state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to provide relatively supportive environments for TANF recipients who are enrolled in postsecondary education programs (**Maine, Iowa, New Mexico, Vermont,** and **Wyoming**). States' reliance on their MOE funds allows them to be more flexible, permitting recipients to attend college without the limitations of federal TANF work and time limit requirements. Under TANF, states must spend an amount equal to at least 80 percent (75 percent if the state meets its work participation rate requirement) of the amount that they spent in fiscal year 1994 on AFDC-related programs (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1999b). The drawback, however, is that fewer recipients can be accommodated with limited MOE funds, especially in the increasing number of states that are facing budget shortfalls.

The **Maine** *Parents As Scholars* (PAS) program has served as one model for other states to emulate and was discussed in Congress as part of the 2002 federal reauthorization debate. Several states' programs include features that also can serve as models for other states. For example, **Georgia**'s program will allow TANF recipients to attend graduate school when it is required to activate a professional certification needed for employment, while **Illinois** "stops the clock" so that TANF recipients who are enrolled in college and maintain a 2.5 grade point average are not constrained by time limits. **Kentucky**'s law requires its Cabinet for Families and Children to notify and encourage TANF recipients to participate in postsecondary education.

Forty eight states and the District of Columbia provide such support services as child care and transportation to TANF recipients who are enrolled in allowable postsecondary education programs. The only exception is **Mississippi,** which does not offer child care or transportation assistance to TANF recipients enrolled in college.

Colorado, Montana, New York, North Carolina and **Ohio** have passed along responsibility for certification of work activities to the county level. Similarly, in **Florida**, although the state allows TANF recipients to use postsecondary education alone to fulfill work requirements for up to 12 months, regional workforce boards make the final determination regarding who will participate in educational activities and the extent to which the state will provide financial assistance to TANF recipients who are students.

Regardless of the strategies used, most states maintain certain requirements for TANF students. For example, they must be enrolled in a degree program that leads to employment, must maintain a certain grade point average, must make "satisfactory progress" in their degree programs, and must complete the program in a specified amount of time. Also, with the exception of **Georgia**, states do not allow recipients to enroll in graduate degree programs.

State legislators have continued to push for legislative expansions of the college option for low income women. For example, a **California** bill would amend the state welfare law to allow recipients pursuing specified postsecondary education programs to count study time toward their 32 hours per week work participation requirement. Although the bill passed both houses of the California legislature, the governor vetoed it at the end of 2001. A **New Hampshire** bill would establish a *Parents As Scholars* program to provide financial aid and living assistance to a maximum of 500 student TANF recipients who are pursuing vocational and postsecondary education programs up to and including an associate's degree; the program also would allow recipients to meet the work requirement through internships, work-study, or employment on campus or close to campus. And a **Washington** bill would enable qualified welfare recipients to attend college on a full time basis as an allowable work activity.

Now more than ever, policy makers must keep the door open to a college education for TANF recipients. **If our welfare reform goal truly is to reduce women's and children's poverty – then we have a proven solution**. As one TANF student noted: "Supporting someone on TANF for four years while she gets a college degree is a drop in the bucket considering that you will have someone who is fully educated, who can get a job at decent wages, and you will get that money back in taxes. You know, if you just give us a little now you get so much from us later, because then you have an educated society of people who won't be dependent on welfare" (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001, page 14).

State-by-State Summary of
Postsecondary Education Provisions –
TANF Implementation Laws and Administrative Actions

ALABAMA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Code of Alabama 1975, as amended
Law Title: Aid to Dependent Children
Regulation Number: Administrative Code Chapters 660-2-2; 660-2-20
Regulation Title: Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program
JOBS Program Policy Manual
Program Name: JOBS

Key Provisions: Postsecondary education for TANF recipients is permitted under JOBS, Alabama's welfare-to-work program. Participants in the JOBS program must engage in work or a work activity for at least 32 – 35 hours per week. Vocational education for up to 12 months is specifically included as a work activity.

Postsecondary education other than vocational education is not specifically listed as an approved work activity in the statute; however, the JOBS Program policy manual allows postsecondary education in limited situations and defines postsecondary education as "any educational activity higher than a high school diploma or GED which is purely academic in nature, including, but not limited to, math, English, social studies, literature, education, and science." Participants must combine postsecondary education with another work activity and must maintain good academic standing. There is no specific limit on the amount of time that a recipient can be engaged in postsecondary education.

Postsecondary education may also be allowed if a TANF recipient is enrolled in college at the time she begins to receive benefits. In this situation, she may be allowed to continue, at the discretion of the case manager, if she: makes satisfactory progress in the postsecondary education activity; is expected to complete the activity within a reasonable period of time, usually 12 months; the program in which she is enrolled is likely to lead to full-time employment; and the postsecondary education "does not interfere with [her] ability to meet the required level of participation" at the point at which she has received assistance for 24 months. The state will not pay for tuition, but if the case manager approves of the program, the state will pay for child care and transportation.

Contact: Public Assistance Department, Alabama Department of Human Resources
Tel: (334) 242-1950, Fax: (334) 242-1950
Email: ogapi@dhr.state.al.us
Website: http://www.dhr.state.al.us/fad/pa.asp

ALASKA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 47, Chapter.27, (2000) Alaska Code
Law Title: Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP)
Regulation Title: Alaska State TANF Plan
Alaska Temporary Assistance Manual

Key Provisions: Alaska's TANF law and state plan include vocational training as a work activity. The state's Temporary Assistance Manual further provides that college is considered part of vocational training. A TANF recipient may engage in vocational training if the amount of time she has remaining on assistance will enable her to complete the training, search for and find unsubsidized employment, and the training she desires leads to employment in a recognized occupation expected to be in demand in the labor market. Similarly, a TANF recipient who is enrolled in college prior to receiving assistance may have her education approved if it meets the above criteria. Student recipients may continue with college even if it is not approved; however, it must then be combined with other allowable work activities.

The state expresses a strong preference for training or education that does not exceed 12 months; however, training that goes longer may be approved "when the training offers viable employment opportunities with earnings that allow the family to leave Temporary Assistance prior to the 60 month time limit."

Support services that may be provided to TANF student recipients include tuition payments for expenses not otherwise provided by other sources, transportation, cost of professional licenses, and child care.

Contact: Division of Public Assistance, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Tel: (907) 465-1754 or (907) 465-5847, Fax: (907) 465-5154
Website: http://health.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/

ARIZONA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation, waiver and administrative action

Law Number: Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 46, Chapter 2, Article 5
Law Title: EMPOWER – Jobs Program
Regulation Title: State of Arizona State Plan for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Key Provisions: Arizona's TANF program, the Employing and Moving People Off Welfare and Encouraging Responsibility (EMPOWER) program, was initially established pursuant to a Section 1115 waiver from the US Department of Health and Human Services; the waiver expired on September 30, 2002. The statute further establishes the Jobs Program for TANF recipients as part of the EMPOWER program.

Full time participation in postsecondary education for 12 months is included as an allowable work activity in the statute; after 12 months, postsecondary education must be combined with work. The state plan provides that student recipients may receive up to two four month extensions after that to complete a postsecondary education program.

The state provides child care and access to transportation for student recipients. In addition, the state may provide funding for education or training for current or former recipients who are employed in unsubsidized jobs. The training must enable recipients or former recipients to acquire more valuable work skills. In addition, recipients or former recipients may receive up to $2,000 to train for jobs that are in demand in the local labor market.

Contact: Family Assistance Administration, Arizona Department of Economic Security
Tel: (602) 542-0339/(602) 542-9935 or (800) 352-8401
Website: http://www.de.state.az.us/links/faa/aimbig.html

ARKANSAS

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Act 1567
Law Title: Revised Arkansas Personal Responsibility and Public Assistance Reform Act of 1999
Regulation Title: Manual of the Temporary Employment Assistance Program

Key Provisions: TANF recipients in Arkansas can pursue postsecondary education through participation in degree, training and certificate programs at two and four year colleges, universities and technical schools. Recipients who pursue postsecondary education must: be enrolled in programs that will lead to immediate employment in fields appearing on Arkansas' *List of Demand Occupations*; have a specific position for which an employer has submitted a letter demonstrating intent to hire persons upon successful completion of training; or be training for an occupation in local demand but not on the state list, if the local demand is documented.

In each of these programs, classroom instruction, laboratory time and study time can be used to meet the recipient's work requirements, but time spent traveling to and from educational activities does not count towards a recipient''s work requirement. A recipient participating in education and training programs will not be required to participate in other work activities for more than 15 hours per week.

The state provides supportive services to TANF recipients including child care, transportation and medical assistance.

Contact: Office of Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), Arkansas Department of Human Services
Tel: (800) 482-8988
Website: http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/sgfamily.htm

CALIFORNIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Chapter 270, 1997 Statutes of the State of California
Law Title: The Welfare to Work Act of 1997, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Act (CalWORKS)

Key Provisions: CalWORKS allows TANF recipients to pursue an undergraduate degree or certificate program as an allowable work activity, with certain restrictions. The law requires participation in these programs for at least 32 hours per week, and participation is determined by the number of hours required for classroom, laboratory and/or internship activities. If participation is less than 32 hours per week, TANF recipients must combine school with work or another approved work activity to make up the difference.

TANF recipients must already be enrolled in the educational program at appraisal and must be making satisfactory progress, which includes regular classroom attendance. In addition, the recipient's county welfare office must determine that completion of the educational program is likely to lead to self-supporting employment. An educational program is deemed as leading to employment if it is on a list of programs that the county welfare department and local education agencies and providers agree leads to employment. The recipient's welfare to work plan also must reflect that determination.

If the educational program is not on the approved list, the county must determine if the program leads to employment by requiring recipients to demonstrate to their county welfare office that the program will lead to self-supporting employment and that such documentation is included in their welfare-to-work plan.

A TANF recipient already in possession of a bachelor's degree is not eligible to participate, unless she is pursuing a California regular classroom teaching credential in a college or university with an approved teacher credential preparation program.

Recipients have access to a variety of support services to enable them to participate in the activity for which they have been approved, including child care, transportation, the cost of books, fees, and personal counseling.

Contact: California Department of Social Services
Tel: (916) 657-3667 or (916) 657-2586
Welfare-to-Work Division
Website: http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/WelfaretoW_282.htm or
http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/

COLORADO

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 26, Article 2, Part 7, Colorado Revised Statutes
Law Title: Colorado Works Program Act
Regulation Title: Colorado State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Postsecondary education is an allowable work activity under the Colorado State TANF Plan. The plan provides specifically that TANF recipients are to be considered as engaging in work when they are participating in other work activities "such as, but not limited to, substance abuse treatment, postsecondary education, work study employment, and volunteer activities." However, access to postsecondary education for TANF recipients is actually determined by counties. In addition, counties have the authority to permit other education-related activities such as study time, laboratory time or a combination of both to fulfill work requirements.

Support services available to recipients include child care, life skills training, mental health counseling and parenting classes.

Contact: Office of Self-Sufficiency at the Colorado Department of Human Services
Tel: (303) 866-5700, Fax: (303) 866-4047
Website: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/odd/Self_Sufficiency.html
Colorado WORKs Office
Tel: (303) 866-5981, Fax: (303) 866-5098, TDD: (303) 866-6293
Website: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/oss/CWP/cwphome.htm

CONNECTICUT

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Public Act 97-2
Law Title: Jobs First
Regulation Title: State of Connecticut TANF State Plan
Jobs First Employment Services Program Policy and Procedures Manual (April 2002)

Key Provisions: Connecticut's Jobs First program does not include postsecondary education degree programs as an allowable activity; however, if a TANF recipient who is already enrolled in a postsecondary education program at the time her benefits start is within six months of earning her degree, the Jobs First policy manual provides that "the case manager is to ensure that the approved activities do not interfere with the participant's completion of his/her postsecondary program. In these cases, the number of hours of participation in postsecondary education can be data entered as vocational education," defined as formal training which leads to a particular skill or knowledge and may include occupational skills training and entrepreneurial training.

Support services, including child care and transportation, may be provided to Jobs First participants who are engaged in allowable work activities, including postsecondary education, if they already are involved in allowable work activities.

Contact: Family Support/Services at the Connecticut Department of Social Services
Tel: (860) 424-5540 or (800) 842-1508
Email: familyasst.dss@po.state.ct.us
Website: http://www.drs.state.ct.us/welfare.htm

DELAWARE

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Section 523, Chapter 5, Title 31, Delaware Code
Law Title: Delaware Welfare Reform Education and Training Assistance Act

Key Provisions: Delaware allows TANF recipients to pursue secondary and postsecondary vocational education and training programs. Student TANF recipients can include work, work-study, internships, externships and research assistantships to fulfill their required 20 hours per week work requirement. Recipients must be full time students, attend classes regularly, and be in good academic standing in order to continue to pursue their degrees. Study time, workfare and travel to and from school are not allowable work activities under the 20 hours per week requirement. If the recipient's total school plus work activities equal 20 hours per week and the student meets minimum attendance and performance requirements, she is permitted to remain in school until she completes her program. TANF students who are pursuing advanced degrees or second bachelor's degrees are not eligible to have these activities count toward their 20 hour per week work requirement.

Student recipients can receive support services such as assistance with child care and transportation while in school.

Contact: Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
Tel: (800) 372-2022 or (302) 577-4402, Fax: (302) 255-9500
Email: dhssinfo@state.de.us
Website: http://www.state.de.us/dhss/irm/dhss.htm

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: DC Code, Section 3-201, et seq.
Law Title: Program on Work, Employment and Responsibility (POWER)
Regulation Title: District of Columbia TANF State Plan

Key Provisions: The POWER program, funded with state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds, deems vocational education as a work activity and includes postsecondary education as a form of vocational education. Despite the federal 12 month limit on vocational education, the District allows up to 80 percent of TANF recipients to engage in vocational education training, including college, beyond this limitation.

Student recipients can receive child care and transportation assistance. In addition, TANF recipients who are pursuing postsecondary education can receive from $4,000 to $6,000 through the District's Tuition Assistance Program Initiative for TANF (TAPIT).

Contact: District of Columbia Human Services Department
Tel: (202) 463-6211 or (202) 279-6002
Website: http://dhs.dc.gov/main.asp or
http://dhs.dc.gov/info/welfare/employment.shtm

FLORIDA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: 2001 Florida Statutes, Title XXXI (Labor), Chapter 445 (Workforce Innovation)
Law Title: Workforce Innovation
Law Number: 2001 Florida Statutes, Title XXXI (Labor), Chapter 445.048 (Workforce Innovation)
Law Title: Passport to Economic Progress Act

Key Provisions: Florida's TANF program allows recipients the option to fulfill state work requirements through postsecondary education if approved by a regional workforce board. Florida work requirements provide that recipients must participate in a work activity for the maximum number of hours allowable under federal law, provided that recipients are not required to work in excess of 40 hours a week. Participation in postsecondary education must not exceed 12 months.

Regional workforce boards may also establish Retention Incentive Training Accounts (RITAs) for recipients; these accounts may be used to pay for such education related expenses as tuition, fees, educational materials, coaching and mentoring, transportation, and child care. RITAs may be used to help workforce boards to "promote job retention and to enable upward job advancement into higher skilled, higher paying employment." Further, these accounts may be utilized in connection with an approved list of programs and courses at postsecondary institutions for TANF participants who have become employed.

Through the *Passport to Economic Progress Act* of 2001, a one year pilot project, Florida allows former TANF recipients to participate in transitional education services for up to four years after the family is no longer receiving TANF. A report on the effectiveness of the program and whether it should be extended is due to the Florida legislature by January 1, 2003.

Contact: Florida Department of Children and Family Services
Tel: (727) 834-3900
Website: http://www.state.fl.us
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation
Website: http://www.floridajobs.org/

GEORGIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 49, Chapter 4, Georgia State Code
Law Title: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act
Regulation Title: Georgia TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Georgia's TANF program requires recipients to engage in work activities whenever feasible. College is included in the TANF state plan as an allowable work activity and TANF recipients are permitted to attend college – defined as "education which may lead to an undergraduate degree'' – if the education program is directly related to the attainment of a specific job skill, as delineated in the individual's Personal Work Plan. Enrollment in postgraduate college programs may be supported only when required to reactivate a professional certification that is required to obtain employment.

TANF recipients participating in approved work activities have access to a variety of support services, including child care, transportation, and occupational licensing fees.

Contact: Family and Children Services Division at the Georgia Department of Human Resources
Tel: (404) 657-7660
Website: http://www2.state.ga.us/departments/dhr/dfcs/index.html

HAWAII

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation, waiver, and administrative action

Law Number: Chapter 346-29, Hawaii Revised Statutes
Law Title: Applications for Public Assistance
Law Number: Chapter 346-68, Hawaii Revised Statutes
Law Title: Bridge to Hope
Regulation Title: State of Hawaii Temporary Assistance For Needy Families Program State Plan
Program Name: Pursuit of New Opportunities (PONO) Program; First to Work

Key Provisions: Hawaii's Pursuit of New Opportunities (PONO) and First to Work employment program allow TANF recipients to pursue postsecondary education as an allowable work activity. The PONO program was created pursuant to a Section 1115 waiver from the US Department of Health and Human Services; an eight year program first approved on August 16, 1996, and first implemented statewide on February 1, 1997.

TANF recipients pursuing or wishing to pursue a full time postsecondary education program must meet a minimum requirement of 20 hours overall of school and paid employment with at least four hours per week in paid employment. TANF recipients who are part time students must meet a minimum work participation rate of 32 hours per week. Once the hours of education are determined, the remaining hours may be in either paid or unpaid work activity. The school or program in which the student is enrolled determines whether a student is full time or part time.

Education is "offered at community colleges or postsecondary vocational training programs that lead to recognized careers for which there is or will be a demand in the job market." Internships, practicums, externships, or other activities required by a course of study, whether paid or unpaid, will count toward meeting the work activity requirement. There is no limit on the time that can be spent in postsecondary education.

The Hawaii legislature also has created a postsecondary education transitional benefits program within the Department of Human Services, Bridge to Hope. The program targets heads of household in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and allows TANF recipients to continue to receive benefits if they are pursuing a postsecondary education, notwithstanding the TANF work requirement.

First to Work recipients are eligible for support services including child care, transportation and educational expenses.

Contact: Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division of the Hawaii Department of Human Services
Tel: (808) 586-5230 or (808) 586-4997, Fax: (808) 586-5229
Website: http://www.state.hi.us/dhs/

IDAHO

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 3, Chapter 8, Idaho Code
Law Title: Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho (TAFI)
Regulation Number: Idaho Administrative Code 16.03.08
Regulation Title: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Rules Governing the Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho (TAFI) Program
Idaho State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: The Temporary Assistance for Families in Idaho (TAFI) program allows TANF recipients to participate in vocational postsecondary education and the TANF state plan provides that "academic training may be counted if the training will lead directly to employment such as teaching, nursing, etc., and the individual is participating in other activities including employment." Participation in vocational education can be counted as an allowable work activity for 12 months.

The TANF state plan provides that TAFI recipients also can receive supportive services, including child care, transportation, fees for licensure and certification, and costs for books, tuition, and "miscellaneous educational costs."

Contact: Idaho Health and Welfare Department
Tel: (208) 334-5500
TAFI Website: http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/Welfare/TAFI/TAFI_frame.htm
Division of Welfare, Bureau of Policy
Tel: (208) 334-5818
Website: http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/Welfare/index.htm

ILLINOIS

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Article IXA, 305 Illinois Compiled Statutes, Section 5
Law Title: Education, Training and Employment Program for Recipients under Article IV
Regulation Number: Illinois Regulation Number 1133, Section 112.2
Regulation Title: Notice of Emergency Amendment – Time Limit on Receipt of Benefits for Clients Enrolled in Postsecondary Education Policy Manual 21-01-08c

Key Provisions: Illinois allows full time postsecondary education participation to count as an allowable TANF work activity. In addition, full time student TANF recipients who maintain a 2.5 grade point average in an accredited educational program do not have their time in school counted toward their lifetime limit for welfare benefits. Recipients can "stop the clock" on their time limit for welfare benefits for up to 36 months (four school years) either consecutively or nonconsecutively. This only applies to months in which a participant is attending classes.

Recipients enrolled in their first semester of postsecondary education are not subject to a work requirement since they have yet to receive a grade point average. However, recipients will not be able to "stop the clock" on their time limits for welfare benefits during this time.

In addition, if a recipient's grade point average falls below 2.5, the following months in school count toward the 60 month TANF lifetime limit; recipients can "stop the clock" once their grade point average rises to 2.5. Recipients are given one semester or quarter to raise their grade point average to 2.5 without having to meet a work requirement. If the recipient's grade point average falls below 2.5 for two consecutive academic periods, then she will be subject to a work requirement. Recipients could continue to pursue postsecondary education but must maintain a 2.0 grade point average and combine classes with other allowable work activities for a total of 30 hours per week; at least 20 hours per week must be in allowable work activities. The recipient must also take at least five credit hours of classes. The other five hours may be credit hours, study time or a combination of both.

The recipient must be pursuing a postsecondary education program that leads to employment in a recognized occupation or that upgrades skills for current employment. Jobs must also be available in the chosen field in the geographic area where the recipient intends to work upon completion of her postsecondary education program. Finally, in determining whether postsecondary education is appropriate, the Illinois Department of Human Services must take into account factors such as the recipient's educational and work history, aptitude for further education, career goals, ability to finance tuition and other expenses not provided by the Department of Human Services and the ability to arrange transportation, child care and other family obligations. TANF recipients already

in possession of a bachelor's degree are not eligible to enroll in postsecondary education programs.

Supportive services available to recipients and which may become part of an employability plan include child care assistance, transportation, and books and fees.

Contact: Illinois Department of Human Services
Tel: (217) 557-1564 or (800) 252-8635
Website: http:// www.state.il.us/agency/dhs/tanfnp.html
Office of Employment and Training
Tel: (217) 782-5709
Email: DHSD62LX@dhs.state.il.us

INDIANA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by administrative action

Law Number: Title 12, Article 8, Indiana Code
Law Title: Administering Family and Social Services
Regulation Title: Indiana Manpower Placement and Comprehensive Training Policy Manual
Program Title: Indiana Manpower Placement And Comprehensive Training Program (IMPACT)

Key Provisions: TANF recipients in Indiana are required to participate in the IMPACT program, which assists participants with "unsubsidized employment, work experience, job skills training and vocational education," which may be either pre- or post high school vocational education and which must be focused on an occupation. The post high school education is limited to an associate's degree. Recipients may participate in vocational education for up to 12 months, and combine education with other work activities. TANF recipients who already are engaged in postsecondary education when they enter the IMPACT program may have it considered as an allowable work activity if it meets these requirements.

IMPACT funds may cover up to $5,000 of training and education costs, including tuition, mandatory fees, books and training manuals, and are available for TANF recipients engaged in vocational education after Pell grants or other scholarships or loans are applied to educational expenses.

Contact: Division of Family and Children, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Tel: (317) 232-4704, Fax: (317) 233-4693, Manager of Policy Development: (317) 233-0890
Website: http://www.in.gov/fssa/families/resources/index.html
IMPACT Program
Tel: (317) 232-2002, Fax: (317) 232-4615
Website: http://www.in.gov/fssa/families/impact/index.html

IOWA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Chapter 239B of the Code of Iowa
Law Title: Family Investment Program
Regulation Title: Titles IV and IX of the Iowa Administrative Code
Iowa State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Iowa's Family Investment Program and the TANF state plan require TANF recipients to participate in one or more of a variety of work activities; postsecondary education that prepares the recipient for a specific professional or vocational area of employment is an allowable work activity. There is no limit on the amount of time that a recipient can be enrolled in postsecondary education.

All adult members of a household are required to work toward the goal of self-sufficiency by establishing a Family Investment Agreement that describes the training, education or employment services the recipient will undertake in order to eliminate the need for cash assistance.

PROMISE JOBS, funded by state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds, is that part of the state program that provides work and training services for recipients eligible for Family Investment Program assistance. PROMISE JOBS offers participants a variety of support services, including transportation, per diem allowances for participation in practicums that require recipients to live away from home while in school, tuition, fees, books and supplies for people in short term training.

Contact: Division of Economic Assistance, Iowa Department of Human Services
Tel: (515) 281-3163 or (515) 281-3131, Fax: (515) 281-7791
Website: http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/EconomicAssistance/EconomicAssistance.asp

KANSAS

Access to postsecondary education allowed by administrative action

Program Title: Kansas Works
Regulation Title: Kansas State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Kansas includes both vocational education and postsecondary education as approved work activities for TANF recipients. Vocational education is defined as "an intensive skill specific vocational curriculum, less than 12 months, with a requirement of more than 20 hours per week." Vocational education support may be denied if the participant does not attend class as scheduled and does not maintain a satisfactory grade point average. The state plan does not limit vocational education to the high school level.

Postsecondary education is defined as college courses that may be approved if the courses are short term, job-targeted or job-related and skill specific. Moreover, employment must be available in the chosen field of study. General course work leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree may be approved on a case by case basis.

Funding for tuition, books, fees, mandatory supplies, and uniforms for approved plans are available for participants engaged in allowable work activities. Child care is available for students engaged in education and training who are working at least 20 hours per week.

Contact: Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Tel: (785) 296-3959, Fax: (785) 296-2173
Website: http://www.srskansas.org/ees/taf-ga.htm

KENTUCKY

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislative and administrative action

Law Number: Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 205, as amended
Law Title: An Act relating to the provision of support services for low-income parents in the process of achieving self-sufficiency
Regulation Number: 904 KAR 2:370
Regulation Title: Technical Requirements for Kentucky Works Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Plan

Key Provisions: Kentucky allows TANF recipients to participate in two years of postsecondary education. Full time student TANF recipients are considered exempt from TANF work requirements as long as they are progressing satisfactorily in their studies, as defined by the postsecondary education institution.

To continue their education beyond two years, recipients must combine allowable work activities with their education program. Recipients are required to be engaged in allowable work activities for 30 hours per week; 10 of these hours may be used for postsecondary education activities.

Kentucky's TANF law also requires the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children to specifically notify and encourage TANF recipients to pursue educational or vocational programs, including postsecondary education, to the extent possible under the TANF work requirements.

The Cabinet also provides supportive services to student recipients including child care, transportation, payments for school supplies, car repairs, and fees for registration, financial aid applications, and student activities.

Contact: Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K.T.A.P.)
Tel: (502) 564-7050
Website: http://ww.cfc.state.ky.us/help/KTAP.asp
Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children
Tel: (502) 564-3866, Fax: (502) 564-3866
Website: http://cfc.state.ky.us

LOUISIANA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 67, Part III, Subpart 5, Louisiana Code
Law Title: Family Independence Work Program
Regulation Title: Louisiana State TANF Plan – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Key Provisions: Louisiana allows TANF recipients to engage in postsecondary education in the form of vocational education, which is listed in the state statute as an allowable work activity. Student recipients can engage in postsecondary education for up to 12 months and may receive child care, transportation, and other employment related expenses "designed to eliminate or moderate the most common barriers to employment."

Contact: Office of Family Support at the Louisiana Department of Social Services
Tel: (225) 342-2511
Program Policy Section of Family Assistance Division
Tel: (225) 342-4054, Fax: (225) 342-9481
Website: http://www.dss.state.la.us/offofs/html/tanf_state_plan.html

MAINE

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: LB 1896, Title 22, Chapter 530
Law Title: Parents as Scholars Program

Key Provisions: Created with state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds, Maine's Parents as Scholars program is a separate administrative structure that protects parents in college from federal time limits and work requirements to which TANF recipients must adhere. The law establishes an alternative to using TANF funds to help recipients gain access to postsecondary education. However, because state funds are used, this counts towards Maine's MOE requirement under TANF.

Under the Parents as Scholars program, up to 2,000 low income Maine residents who would otherwise be eligible for TANF can receive cash benefits and supportive services if they are enrolled in an undergraduate two or four year degree program. The amount they receive from the Parents as Scholars program is equivalent to the amount they would have received under TANF. For tax purposes, any aid received from the Parents as Scholars program is to be disregarded as income. Supportive services include child care, transportation reimbursement, car repair assistance, eye and dental care, and books and supplies.

Recipients must be pursuing a postsecondary educational program designed to lead to employment that will significantly improve their ability to become self-supporting. In addition, the law requires that recipients must possess the aptitude to successfully complete the postsecondary education program. Case workers have the discretion to determine whether a recipient has the ability to complete the degree based on such factors as her educational background, whether the degree will lead to employment and whether the recipient is committed to graduating.

Recipients who are in the first 24 months of their educational program must participate in a combination of education, training, study or work experience for an average of 20 hours per week. Recipients may receive additional aid after 24 months if they remain in their educational programs and agree to work for at least 20 hours per week in addition to time spent in education, training or study.

Recipients also must be making satisfactory academic progress in their postsecondary education programs. The Maine Department of Human Services has the discretion to define "satisfactory academic progress" but the Department cannot disapprove an educational program because of the length of the degree program. TANF recipients who already have marketable bachelor's degrees are ineligible for the program.

Contact: The Bureau of Family Independence, Maine Department of Human Services
Tel: (207) 287-3707 or (207) 287-2826, Fax: (207) 287-5096

TANF and Parents As Scholars Program
Tel: (207) 287-5089
Website: http://www.state.me.us/dhs/bfi/pas.htm

MARYLAND

Access to postsecondary education allowed by administrative action

Regulation Number: Maryland Family Investment Administration Action Transmittal #98-38
Regulation Title: Clarification of the Role of Higher Education in the Family Investment Program
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families TANF State Plan
Regulation Number: Maryland Family Investment Information Memo #99-37
Regulation Title: Baltimore City Community College Community College Program

Key Provisions: Maryland's Family Investment Program and the state plan allow TANF recipients to pursue postsecondary education. TANF recipients who are participating in postsecondary education also must be employed at least 20 hours per week in an unsubsidized job or participating in an approved work activity. They must maintain at least a C average in all course work, be engaged in a course of study that will take two years or less to complete, and be enrolled in an educational program that leads directly to employment. Child care and other supportive services are available to recipients who participate in postsecondary education.

In addition, the Family Investment Administration has launched Project Impact, a pilot project with Baltimore City Community College and the Baltimore Department of Social Services, that allows TANF recipients who attend Baltimore City Community College to have their postsecondary education count as a stand alone work activity. To qualify, TANF recipients must currently be enrolled in a full time certificate or Associate of Arts program at Baltimore City Community College, maintain a C average, be engaged in a course of study that will take two years or less to complete, and be enrolled in an educational program that leads directly to employment. The program was reauthorized by the Family Investment Administration for an additional two years in 2001.

Contact: Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources
Tel: (410) 767-7150
Website: http://www.dhr.state.md.us/fia/cassist.htm

MASSACHUSETTS

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation, waiver and administrative action

Law Number: Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1995
Law Title: Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)
Regulation Numbers: 106 CMR 203.400; 207.140
Regulation Titles: Work Program; Educational Component

Key Provisions: Massachusetts' Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) work requirements are operated under a waiver that is approved through September 30, 2005. TAFDC recipients who are non-exempt must work at least 20 hours per week. Both parents in two parent households are subject to the work requirement.

Exemptions include having a child living in the home who is below mandatory school age, caring for a foster child with physical needs delineated by the state, being essential to the care of disabled family members, being disabled, and being pregnant and expected to give birth within the next 120 days.

TAFDC regulations provide that non-exempt recipients may comply with the work requirement by combining work with participation in education that will prepare them to obtain and maintain employment. A recipient may engage in postsecondary education when it is not beyond the associate's degree level, will be completed within three years, will lead to employment, and is at least half time. The recipient cannot already have a postsecondary degree and must be making satisfactory progress as defined by the educational institution.

The state may provide child care and transportation costs for recipients who participate in education.

Contact: Employment Services Program at the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
Tel: (617) 348-8500 or (800) 249-2007
Regulation information: http://www.ma.us/dta/dtatoday/policy
Website: http://wwwstate.ma.us/dta/assist/ESP/INDEX.htm

MICHIGAN

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Public Act 280 (2001)
Law Title: Social Welfare Act
Regulation Title: Michigan State TANF Plan
Program Name: Family Independence Program

Key Provisions: TANF recipients in Michigan can pursue postsecondary education if they meet the 20 hour per week work requirement independently of their classroom instruction, internships, externships, laboratory time and other components of a college education.

In 1999, Michigan adopted a provision known as 10/10/10 for students in the second year of a two year undergraduate degree program, in the final year of a four year degree, or in a certificate program that can be completed in 12 months or less. Eligible single parents with no child under six may fulfill the work requirement by working at least 10 hours, attending class or a laboratory for up to 10 hours, and studying for up to 10 hours, for a total of 30 hours. Single parents with a child under 6 who are in the final year of a degree program may meet the 20 hour work requirement by working 10 hours and engaging in 10 hours of educational activity. However, students in all cases must be in educational programs designed to lead directly to a specific job that is currently in demand as determined by local Workforce Development Boards. The boards have not published guidelines to determine which jobs are in demand.

TANF recipients may be eligible for a variety of support services, including child care services, transportation assistance, car repair, mentoring, and purchase of tools, uniforms or work clothes.

Contact: Michigan State Family Independence Agency
Tel: (517) 373-2035
Website: http://www.mfia.state.mi.us or
http://www.michigan.gov/fia/0,1607,7-124-5453--,00.html

MINNESOTA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Minnesota Session Laws 2001, 1st Special Session, Chapter 9, Article 10
Law Title: Minnesota Family Investment Program

Key Provisions: Minnesota's current TANF law became effective in 2001 and increases to 24 the number of months all TANF recipients can pursue postsecondary education. Prior law limited TANF recipients to 12 months in most postsecondary education programs, though a small number each year were granted permission to pursue programs lasting up to 24 months. The Minnesota Family Investment Program now allows recipients to remain in educational programs approved as part of their road to self-sufficiency for two years without special permission or waiver.

Other requirements remain in place. The educational activity must lead to gainful employment; the student must make satisfactory progress toward completion of her education program; and the approved education program must be necessary in order to achieve the stated goals of the self-sufficiency plan. Finally, TANF recipients who already have a marketable associate's, vocational or technical degree are not eligible.

Supportive services available to TANF recipients include child care and transportation.

Contact: Minnesota Department of Human Services
Tel: (651) 215-1825
Website: http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/Welfare/default.htm
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
Tel: (651) 296-4476
Website: http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/Program/mfipminn.htm

MISSISSIPPI

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Title 43, Chapters 1 and 17, Mississippi Code 1972, Annotated
Law Title: The Mississippi Welfare Reform Program Restructuring Act
Regulation Title: Mississippi TANF State Plan
Program Name: WorkFirst

Key Provisions: Mississippi's TANF law requires that single recipients participate in at least 30 hours per week of an allowable work activity. In families with two parents, they must work for a combined total of at least 55 hours per week if the recipient's spouse is not caring for a disabled child or otherwise exempt and the family receives federally funded child care.

The state plan provides that a recipient can participate in an "organized educational program which offers a sequence of courses directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations that requires a baccalaureate or advanced degree." Up to 24 months of postsecondary education is allowed.

The state will not provide supportive services, such as child care or transportation, for individuals who are attending college.

Contact: Division of Economic Assistance, the Mississippi Department of Human Services
Tel: (601) 359-4800/(601) 359-4500 or (800) 948-4060
Website: http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/ca_tanf.html

MISSOURI

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: HB 1574/961
Law Title: Temporary Assistance
Regulation Title: Missouri State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Missouri includes vocational education and training as an approved work activity for TANF recipients and defines vocational education as "participation in programs offered through colleges, universities, community colleges, or other entities offering a course of study that leads toward a degree, certificate or license." A single parent is considered to be engaged in work if she participates in any combination of work activities for at least 30 hours per week. In two parent families, the parents must be engaged in any combination of work activities for at least 55 hours per week – the first parent for a minimum of 35 hours and the second parent for 20 hours per week. The 35 hour minimum for the first parent in a two parent household must include 20 hours of work activities that exclude education related activities. There is no specific time limit for education and training.

Missouri offers a variety of support services to TANF recipients engaged in approved work activities, including transportation, child care, and funding for job-related vocational training.

Contact: Division of Family Services, the Missouri Department of Social Services
Tel: (573) 751-3221 or (573) 751-4815
Website: http://www.dss.state.mo.us/wreform/index.htm

MONTANA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and waiver

Law Number: Law 1997, Chapter 515
Law Title: Families Achieving Independence in Montana
Waiver: Sec. 53-4-601 Montana Code Annotated
Regulation Title: Montana State Plan for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program

Key Provisions: Montana operates its TANF program, Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM), under a waiver from the US Department of Health and Human Services that is in effect through December 31, 2003. The waiver gives the state the authority to define allowable work activities under Demonstration JOBS, a component of Montana's program that is described in the state's TANF Plan.

The plan includes vocational education as an allowable work activity, defined as short term training, postsecondary education, adult basic education and high school activities for teen parents. The plan states that there will be no limits on the duration of vocational education activities or the number of hours in vocational education which count toward compliance with federal participation requirements.

Montana's state plan also provides that participation in postsecondary education is limited to TANF recipients who meet the screening criteria of a Community Operating Plan, which is a community based document developed by an advisory council that focuses on the services available to participants in each community (usually the county) within the state. The plan must be approved by a statewide advisory council and is expected to include strategies for assisting participants to become employed and self-supporting.

The state can provide funds to recipients for such supportive services as child care.

Contact: Human and Community Services Division (HCSD), Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Tel: (406) 444-5622
Website: http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/

NEBRASKA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and waiver

Law Number: LB 445, Revised Statutes of Nebraska, 1995 Supplement, Volume 2, pp. 932-941
Law Title: Welfare Reform Act
Program Name: Employment First

Key Provisions: Nebraska includes postsecondary education in the definition of work activities under a Section 1115 waiver that allows participants in the state's Employment First program to engage in two years of postsecondary education that is related to the fulfillment of an individual's vocational goal and will lead to economic self-sufficiency. Postsecondary education alone can fulfill the work activity requirement if the recipient is enrolled full time.

Supportive services such as transportation and child care also are available to Employment First participants to the extent necessary to allow them to participate in allowable work activities.

Contact: Office of Economic and Family Support Services, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Tel: (402) 471-9325 or (402) 471-2306
Website: http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/wer/werindex.htm

NEVADA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 422
Law Title: New Employees of Nevada (NEON)
Regulation Title: TANF State Plan
Program Name: New Employees of Nevada (NEON)

Key Provisions: The state's employment and training program for TANF recipients, New Employees of Nevada (NEON), permits recipients to pursue postsecondary vocational education training, defined as "training provided by a community college, a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agency, a non-profit or a for-profit trade school of less than 12 months in duration." The plan provides that only 12 months of vocational education is counted as work for purposes of the federal work participation requirement, but the plan also includes "vocational education training programs in excess of the countable 12 months" as an allowable work activity to meet state requirements.

TANF recipients who participate in allowable work activities may be eligible for child care and transportation assistance.

Contact: Welfare Division, Nevada Department of Human Resources
Tel: (775) 684-0500 or (775) 684-4000, Fax: (775) 684-0646
Website: http://welfare.state.nv.us/elig_pay/tanf_home.htm

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Title XII, Chapter 167
Law Title: Employment Program and Family Assistance Program
Program Name: Employment Program and Family Assistance Program

Key Provisions: New Hampshire allows TANF recipients to participate in postsecondary education if it is required for their long term economic independence. Allowable postsecondary education programs must focus on vocational skills training for participants in a specific occupational area. If the TANF student is enrolled half time or less, she also must combine her schooling with part time or full time employment.

A TANF recipient who is already enrolled and in good standing in a postsecondary education program at the time she becomes eligible for assistance may continue to attend that program if it meets the above requirements. In this situation, postsecondary education will not be approved beyond the associate's degree level unless the recipient is completing a bachelor's degree program within two years.

Support services available to recipients include child care, dental care, transportation and limited tuition assistance.

Contact: Family Assistance Division, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Tel: (603) 271-4300 or (603) 271-4580, Fax: (603) 271-4637
Website: http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/TANF/default.htm

NEW JERSEY

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Public Law 1997, Chapter 38
Law Title: Work First New Jersey: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program
Regulation Title: Implementation of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (WFNJ/TANF) Provisions Contained in the March 24, 1997 Emergency Rule
Post WFNJ/TANF Career Advancement Voucher Program Guidance (August 2001)

Key Provisions: TANF recipients are permitted to enroll as full time postsecondary education students as long as they engage in another allowable work activity for at least 15 hours per week. TANF recipients are considered full time students if they are enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours at a postsecondary education institution.

Recipients must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of their postsecondary education degree and be enrolled in a course of study directly related to employment, particularly for a career in high demand in the New Jersey job market.

New Jersey's Career Advancement Voucher Program offers one time vouchers of $4,000 to former TANF recipients who are employed and wish to pursue continued education and training that will enable them to advance on the job.

Supportive services available to recipients include child care, transportation, and limited medical assistance. However, these services will be provided only when no other source of support is available; the recipient is required to seek other sources of support on a regular basis.

Contact: Family Development Division, New Jersey Department of Human Services
Tel: (609) 588-2000 or (609) 588-2400
Website: http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/wfnjws.html

NEW MEXICO

Access to postsecondary education allowed by administrative action

Regulation Number: Title 8, Chapter 102, Sec. 610.12
Regulation Title: Education Works

Key Provisions: TANF recipients may participate in postsecondary education activities through Education Works, a program administered by the Human Services Department and funded from the state's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds. TANF recipients may meet work requirements by attending college for up to 24 months.

TANF students may earn only one degree through the Education Works program and must be enrolled full time as defined by the educational institution. TANF students also must engage in a combination of education, training, study or work-site experience for an average of 20 hours per week. Work-site experience includes paid employment, work study, training-related practicums, internships and clinical placements. One and one-half hours of study time can be counted for each hour of classroom time.

A student recipient who has income from employment may receive supportive services funded by the federal TANF block grant, including reimbursements for child care, transportation and educational expenses.

Contact: Income Support Division at the New Mexico Department of Human Services
Tel: (505) 827-7250
Website: http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/isd.html

NEW YORK

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Title 9-B, Section 335(b)
Law Title: New York State Consolidated Laws, Social Services Law, Public Assistance Employment Programs

Key Provisions: New York allows TANF recipients to pursue vocational education training and educational activities, including no more than two years of postsecondary education. Recipients may attend school part time if full time study would be an undue hardship. The postsecondary education program must be considered a necessary component of the recipient's employability plan by her caseworker and must be related "directly to obtaining useful employment in a recognized occupation."

A recipient can pursue postsecondary education at a community college, licensed trade school, registered business school, or other two year college and must remain in good standing.

In addition, the law requires that student TANF recipients must be offered a work site on campus in order to fulfill their mandatory work requirements.

New York offers a child care subsidy to eligible recipients to enable them to participate in a work activity included in their employment plan.

Contact: New York Temporary and Disability Assistance Office
Tel: (518) 474-9003
Website: http://www.otda.state.ny.us/otda/ta/default.htm#major

NORTH CAROLINA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 108A
Law Title: Work First
Regulation Number: P.L. 104-193
Regulation Title: North Carolina's TANF State Plan

Key Provisions: The North Carolina Work First program gives substantial flexibility to counties to administer the state's TANF program. The TANF state plan, while establishing statewide policy, allows counties "maximum flexibility in designing their employment programs to meet local needs."

The state plan allows TANF recipients to participate in vocational education, including postsecondary education, if it is likely to lead to higher wage jobs. Although vocational education is limited to 12 months for purposes of the federal TANF law, according to the state plan, North Carolina may allow participation beyond 12 months to be counted as "other training." Although the plan does not define "other training" separately, it does include "jobs skills training directly related to employment."

Up to 20 percent of the Work First participants in a county may be enrolled in postsecondary education for up to three years.

Counties also have flexibility to determine how to provide support services to recipients; the state plan allows support services not specifically prohibited by federal law or regulation and specifically mentions child care subsidies and transportation assistance as support services.

Contact: Division of Social Services/Economic Independence, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Tel: (919) 733-3055 or (919) 733-4534, Fax: (919) 733-9386
Website: http://www.dhhs.state.nc.ud/dss/ei/ei_hm.htm

NORTH DAKOTA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Title 50, North Dakota Century Code
Law Title: Public Welfare

Key Provisions: North Dakota allows TANF recipients to pursue postsecondary education for up to 12 months through vocational education. The state pays for support services, such as child care and transportation subsidies, for those TANF recipients who are enrolled in educational programs and for recipients who are fulfilling work requirements while attending school.

The state reviews education requests on a case by case basis and in some circumstances will allow postsecondary education alone to satisfy TANF work requirements beyond the federal mandate of 12 months.

Contact: Public Assistance Division, North Dakota Department of Human Services
Tel: (701) 328-3513 or (701) 328-1715, Fax: (701) 328-1544
Email: sooppj@state.nd.ud
Website: http://lnotes.state.nd.us/dhs/dhsweb.nsf

OHIO

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation, waiver, and administrative action

Law Number: Ohio Revised Code Sections 5107.05, 5107.40, 5107.42, 5107.43, 5107.58, 5107.60, 5107.62 and 5107.64
Law Title: Ohio Works First

Key provisions: Ohio's welfare law includes several provisions that allow TANF recipients to pursue postsecondary education. However, since Ohio's welfare system is county-based, each county Department of Human Services (CDHS) has the primary responsibility to implement TANF in its jurisdiction.

Postsecondary education is an allowable work activity for recipients who are enrolled full time in postsecondary education that leads to employment; students may be enrolled at a state institution of higher education, a college or university, a school authorized by the State Board of Proprietary School Registration, or a school that has entered into a contract with the CDHS.

Recipients are allowed to participate in postsecondary education alone for up to 1040 hours; after this limit is reached, the recipient can pursue postsecondary education for five hours per week (21.5 hours per month) as an allowable work activity.

In order to pursue postsecondary education beyond five hours per week, a TANF recipient can elect to participate in one or more "developmental activities" designed to promote self-sufficiency and personal responsibility – including postsecondary education, which is deemed an allowable developmental activity. Recipients can pursue their education for an additional 10 hours per week, for a total of 15 hours per week. Recipients can participate in work activities and developmental activities for more than the number of required weekly hours, provided that the recipient and the CDHS agree.

In addition, state law provides that recipients may pursue postsecondary education as an "alternative work activity," defined as an activity designed to promote self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for recipients who have serious employment barriers and whom the county expects will not be able to participate in allowable work activities in the foreseeable future. Only 20 percent of all TANF recipients can be enrolled in alternative work activities. The county has the discretion to determine the number of hours per week that recipients can spend in alternative work activities.

Ohio Works First participants are eligible to receive support services, including transportation and child care subsidies.

Contact: Ohio Job and Family Services Department
Tel: (614) 466-6282, Fax: (614) 466-2815
Website: http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs

OREGON

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Chapter 418, Oregon Revised Statutes
Law Title: Temporary Assistance For Needy Families Program
Regulation Number: Chapter 461-190-0191, Oregon Administrative Rules
Regulation Title: Employment Programs
Program Name: JOBS Program

Key Provisions: Participants in Oregon's TANF program may attend a higher education institution or a vocational or technical school as part of "self initiated education or training" (SIT) under the JOBS program, which is the employment and training component of Oregon's TANF program.

A TANF recipient is eligible for SIT if she is not already a participant in the JOBS program, has been attending the postsecondary or technical school for at least 30 days, is making good or satisfactory progress, and is likely to complete the training or education program.

The state also requires the TANF recipient to demonstrate that she is unqualified for existing work in the local labor market that would provide a gross monthly income of at least $1,118 after 12 months of work. She also must show that the training or education program will enable her to earn an equivalent income in a local labor market in which she will reside for 12 months following completion of the SIT training or education. Finally, the recipient must show that she will complete the education or training course within 18 months.

A TANF recipient whose application for self-initiated education or training is approved then becomes a participant in the JOBS program and may receive appropriate support services, including child care. However, the state does not cover the cost of the education or training program.

Contact: Children, Adult and Families (CAF) Division, Oregon Department of Human Services Department
Tel: (503) 945-5651, Fax: (503) 373-7032
JOBS for Oregon's Future
Tel: (503) 945-5944, or (503) 945-5600, Fax: (503) 378-2897
Website: http://www.afs.hr.state.or.us/moving.pdf

PENNSYLVANIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Act 35, Public Welfare Code, Sections 201(2) and 403(b)
Law Title: Public Welfare
Regulation Title: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania TANF State Plan
Program Name: Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training (RESET)

Key Provisions: Pennsylvania's RESET program requires TANF recipients to secure employment for a minimum of 20 hours per week. The state plan provides that if the recipient does not secure paid employment, she can meet the work activity requirement by participating in a vocational education program, including postsecondary education, noting specifically that postsecondary education is considered a part of the "continuum of work-related activities."

TANF recipients can pursue postsecondary education alone as a work related activity for 12 months. Recipients can combine education with work for two years without having to meet the 20 hour per week minimum. The state's TANF plan further provides that recipients can pursue an education after two years as long as they meet the 20 hours per week work requirement.

Recipients participating in approved work-related activities have access to child care.

Contact: Office of Income Maintenance (OIM), Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
Tel: (717) 787-1894 or (717) 787-3423, Fax: (717) 787-6765
Website: http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/oim/dpwoim.asp

RHODE ISLAND

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Section 40-5.1-9 of Rhode Island General Laws
Law Title: The Family Independence Act
Program Name: Family Independence Program

Key Provisions: Under Rhode Island's Family Independence Program, education and training opportunities, including postsecondary education programs, are available to TANF recipients during the first 24 months of their Individual Employment Plan. Postsecondary education is an allowable work activity, as are job skills training and other vocational education programs. After 24 months, the recipient must combine postsecondary education with at least 20 hours of work per week in order to continue to receive assistance.

The Department of Human Services provides child care subsidies and health insurance to TANF recipients engaged in allowable work activities.

Contact: Services for Children and Families at the Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Tel: (401) 462-3361 or (888) DHS-3322
Website: http://www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs.famchild/dfipgm.htm

SOUTH CAROLINA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation, waiver, and administrative action

Law Number: South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 43, Social Services, Chapter 5, Article 1
Law Title: Public Aid, Assistance and Relief Generally
Law Number: South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 43, Social Services, Chapter 5, Article 9
Law Title: Family Independence Program
Regulation Number: South Carolina State Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 11

Key Provisions: TANF recipients may receive benefits for no more than 24 out of 120 months and for no more than 60 months in a lifetime with several exceptions, one of which allows recipients to pursue postsecondary education.

Under a waiver granted by the US Department of Health and Human Services, TANF recipients can participate in postsecondary education that is aimed at obtaining useful employment in a recognized occupation, within limits established by the Department of Social Services and reflected in the state JOBS plan. This waiver expires September 30, 2003.

If TANF recipients are involved in an approved training or education program which will not be completed by the 24th month, the state can grant an extension for up to six months if the training or education program has fixed beginning and ending dates and has a specific job or vocational goal. If the recipient has not completed her program by the 30th month and she is making satisfactory progress toward completion, the County Director may grant month-to-month extensions for as long as necessary for the recipient to complete the program and secure employment.

Recipients participating in an approved training or education program may receive support services including, but not limited to, child care, transportation, medical exams, parenting programs, and automobile repairs/car expenses.

Contact: Economic Services, South Carolina Department of Social Services
Tel: (803) 898-7601
Website: http://www.state.sc.us/dss/TANF/tanfreform.html or
http://www.state.sc.us/dss/economicservices/econservs.html

SOUTH DAKOTA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: HB 1056
Law Title: Combined Work and Education Act
Program Name: Combined Work and Education Program

Key Provisions: The Combined Work and Education Program allows TANF recipients to participate in postsecondary education for up to two years in undergraduate programs at institutions accredited by the state. In order to qualify for participation in a postsecondary education program, TANF recipients must demonstrate that the potential earning level in the field for which they are being prepared will be at least 125 percent of the federal poverty level.

TANF students also must participate in other work activities while enrolled in school, in order to fulfill state work requirements. Student TANF recipients with a child under six are required to participate in work activities for a total of 20 hours per week; recipients without children under six are required to participate in work activities for a total of 30 hours per week. However, recipients can use up to 15 credit hours to complete their work requirements; the remaining five or 15 work participation hours can be fulfilled with work study, internships and externships and are not limited to job search participation or community service.

The Department of Social Services will provide support services to student recipients, either directly or through reimbursement; these include, but are not limited to, child care, minor auto repair/car insurance, tools and equipment, and employment related medical expenses.

Contact: TANF Work Program at the South Dakota Department of Social Services
Tel: (605) 773-4678 or (605) 773- 3165
Email: tanf@dss.state.sd.us
Website: http://www.state.sd.us/social/social/TANF/index.htm

TENNESSEE

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 71, Chapter 3, Part 1, as amended
Law Title: Families First Act of 1996
Program Name: Families First

Key Provisions: Tennessee's Families First program requires TANF recipients to work or engage in training and educational activity for 40 hours per week. Educational activities can include self-initiated postsecondary education that leads to a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree.

TANF recipients who wish to enroll in postsecondary education or training programs must make their own arrangements for payment of tuition and must choose an educational institution that meets state accreditation requirements, maintains a quality program, and meets acceptable placement standards; if the institution is not a college, it must maintain academic standards equivalent to those of the state's Technology Centers. TANF students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average, make satisfactory progress toward completion, as defined by the institution, and must attend full time.

Recipients generally may count postsecondary education alone as a work activity for the first 16 months, and then must combine postsecondary education with other allowable work activities.

Families First participants have access to a variety of supportive services, including child care, transportation, family services counseling, dental and optical care, and Medicaid.

Contact: Adult and Family Services, Tennessee Department of Human Services
Tel: (615) 313-5790/(615) 313-5675 or (888) 863-6178
Website: http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/famfir.htm

TEXAS

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Subtitle C, Chapter 31, Section 31.072, Financial Assistance and Service Programs, Texas Statutes
Law Title: Parents as Scholars Pilot Program
Regulation Number: Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 20, Subchapter D, Rules 811.25 and 811.38
Regulation Title: Choices Program Guidelines

Key Provisions: Choices, the Texas employment and training program for TANF recipients, is administered by local workforce development boards. Postsecondary vocational education is allowed as a work activity for up to 12 months and must be related to the types of jobs available in the labor market. Educational programs also must be consistent with the recipient's employment goals as defined in her employment plan, when possible.

Finally, the vocational education program is allowed only if the recipient is likely to secure employment upon completion of the training. A TANF recipient who has registered for, enrolled in, or is attending a postsecondary education program before she becomes eligible for the Choices program may have her participation considered an allowable work activity if it meets these requirements.

Recipients who participate in postsecondary education are eligible to receive child care and transportation.

In addition, Texas enacted a Parents as Scholars pilot program modeled after the innovative programs in **Maine** and **Wyoming**. If funded by the state, the program will provide financial assistance to TANF students from funds allocated to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to help them pursue an undergraduate degree or certificate.

Contact: Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Department of Human Services
Tel: (512) 438-3011 or (888) 834-7406
Website: http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/programs/TexasWorks/TANF.html

UTAH

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: 35A, Chapter 3, Section 301 of the Utah Code
Law Title: Family Employment Program
Regulation Title: Utah's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan

Key Provisions: Postsecondary education for up to 24 months can be approved and supported as part of an individual's employment plan when it is necessary to help unemployed and underemployed parents increase their family incomes.

A TANF recipient who seeks a postsecondary education must meet several requirements. She must show that the education or training would substantially increase her potential earnings and would offset the loss of household income engendered by participation in the education or training program. Recipients also must show that they do not have a degree or skills training certificate in a currently marketable occupation and must demonstrate that they have the ability to be successful in the education or training, that their mental and physical health indicate they could complete the education or training successfully and perform the job once the schooling is completed.

A recipient also must show that her specific employment goal that requires the education or training is marketable in her community or that she will relocate for the purpose of employment. Recipients must be willing to complete the education or training as quickly as possible and within the required timeframes of the program by attending school full time or during summer quarters.

Approved education and training must be combined with other work activities; there is a 24 month limit on education and training. Graduate work can never be approved or supported as part of a plan.

Support services for participants in the Family Employment Program include child care and Medicaid.

Contact: Utah Department of Workforce Services
Tel: (801) 526-9675, Fax: (801) 536-9211
Email: www@dwsa.state.ut.us
Website: http://www.jobs.utah.gov

VERMONT

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Act 147 (2000).
Law Title: Act Relating to Assisting Families to Attain Self-Sufficiency
Regulation Title: Vermont Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition and Health Access (PATH) Bulletin Number 00-32F
Program Name: Postsecondary Education Program for Low-Income Parents

Key Provisions: In 2000, Vermont enacted the Postsecondary Education Program for Low-Income Parents, a separate state-funded program for parents pursuing a two or four year college degree in fields directly related to employment.

Using an approach similar to **Maine**'s Parents as Scholars program, Vermont allows low income parents, including those individuals who would otherwise be eligible for TANF assistance, to receive financial assistance stipends, case management, and support services while pursuing their degrees. In eligible two parent families, only one parent at a time may participate in the program and the second parent must be employed if he or she is able to work.

Student recipients have three years to complete a two year degree and five years to complete a four year degree. If a recipient already is engaged in a two or four year undergraduate program at the time she applies to participate, she must show that she is in good academic standing.

TANF recipients who participate in the program cannot already have an undergraduate degree or, if they do, they must show that the occupations for which the degree prepared them are obsolete, that a disability prevents them from performing those occupations, or that their degrees are not marketable in the current labor market.

Participants may receive support services, including books and mandatory fees (excluding tuition), transportation, and education related equipment and supplies. Child care assistance is not considered a support service under the postsecondary education program, but may be available to participants through the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services' regular child care program.

Contact: Agency of Human Services, Vermont Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition and Health Access
Tel: (802) 241-2853
Website: http://www.dsw.state.vt.us/wrp/wrp.htm

VIRGINIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Code of Virginia, Sections 63.1-86.1, 63.1-105 through 63.1-105.7, 63.1-133.41 through 63.1-133.55, and 63.1-251
Law Title: Virginia Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program
Regulation Title: Commonwealth of Virginia TANF State Plan
TANF Manual
Program Name: Virginia Independence Program
Virginia Initiative for Employment, not Welfare

Key Provisions: Virginia includes postsecondary education as an allowable work activity for up to 24 months and requires that the education program must be related to jobs that are available in the community. A TANF recipient must apply for all available sources of funding for her postsecondary education and the state will reimburse her for the cost of tuition, books and fees that are not covered by other funding. The state's reimbursement will be made only for the 24 months of allowable postsecondary education, unless the student recipient is granted a hardship exception. Such an exception is granted in cases where extending benefits will enable the TANF student to complete her employment-related education.

The TANF manual also allows postsecondary education that is initiated by the participant, if she is enrolled at the time she enters the TANF program. In this situation, the education program must be in a college or university that grants an associate's or bachelor's degree or certificate and she must be pursuing a degree program. Student recipients participating in self-initiated education also must participate in other work activities and must have their education approved to become eligible for supportive services.

Contact: Benefit Programs Division, Virginia Department of Social Services
Tel: (804) 692-1900
Website: http://www.dss.state.va.us/benefit/index/html

WASHINGTON

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 74.08 A
Law Title: WorkFirst Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Regulation Number: Washington Administrative Code Section 388-210-1000
Regulation Title: WorkFirst

Key Provisions: Washington's WorkFirst program, which focuses primarily on employment, also provides for education and training to TANF recipients in limited circumstances. The approved activities focus on three objectives – overcoming barriers to work, going to school while working, and preparing to work.

TANF recipients who cannot find employment or are deemed not ready for work may be referred to services intended to overcome employment barriers, such as substance abuse treatment, high school completion, on-the-job training, work experience, and basic job skills training. They may still be required to look for work while engaged in these activities.

TANF recipients who are working at least 20 hours per week (16 hours in work study) may receive tuition assistance and other support services as they pursue up to 12 months of job-related vocational education.

Recipients who enter Job Search but lack specific skills required for jobs in their local labor market may participate in full time training in either the Pre-Employment Training course that is customized for specific employers and developed locally by community and technical colleges in partnership with employers and WorkFirst agencies, or in the High Wage/High Demand Education program. This program allows TANF recipients to take one year to complete a certificate or a college degree leading to employment in technology, health care, or other high wage, high demand occupations. Under exceptional circumstances, TANF recipients may pursue up to one year of full time higher education in a two or four year institution.

WorkFirst does not support higher education in excess of 12 months or in programs not considered to be in high wage, high demand fields. These educational activities may count toward a recipient's participation requirements if combined with work, but the WorkFirst program does not provide support services, such as child care, for the hours the TANF recipient is attending classes.

Contact: Community Services Division, Washington Department of Social and Health Services
Tel: (360) 902-8400 or (800) 737-0617
Website: http://ww2/wa/gov/dshs/onlinecso/TANF_Support_Services.asp

WEST VIRGINIA

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: West Virginia Code Section 9-9-1 (Attachment C)
Law Title: West Virginia (WV) WORKS
Regulation Title: West Virginia State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: The WV WORKS program requires recipients to be participating in a work activity no later than the 25th month of receipt of benefits. The state TANF plan describes work activities to specifically include vocational education, including postsecondary education activities. Work study, clinicals, practicums and student teaching activities are allowable as work activities.

Vocational education is limited to courses, including courses at a community college or a four year college, that provide employment skills, and may be used to meet the work participation requirement for no more than 12 months.

The state plan also provides child care services to WV WORKS participants.

Contact: Office of Family Support, Bureau for Children and Families, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
Tel: (304) 558-0628 or (304) 485-5595
Website: http://www.wvdhhrs.org/ofs/

WISCONSIN

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation and administrative action

Law Number: Chapter 49.147 of Wisconsin State Statutes
Law Title: Wisconsin Works (W-2)
Regulation Title: Wisconsin State TANF Plan

Key Provisions: Participants in the W-2 program may be required to participate in up to 12 hours per week of education and training activities assigned as part of an Employability Plan. Permissible education and training activities include technical college courses and educational courses that provide an employment skill and TANF recipients may participate for a maximum of two years.

A TANF recipient may participate in a technical college education program only if she maintains full time status as determined by the technical college, regularly attends all classes, maintains a 2.0 grade point average and is employed or engages in work activities for 25 hours per week in addition to her class time. TANF recipients may pursue voluntary postsecondary education after they have met their core work requirements.

Support services are available to all TANF recipients and include child care and transportation.

Contact: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Tel: (608) 266-9700 or (608) 266-7553, Fax: (608) 261-6376
Website: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/tanf/tanfplantoc0203.htm

WYOMING

Access to postsecondary education allowed by legislation

Law Number: Wyoming Statute 42-2-109
Law Title: Review of Assistance and services; termination or modification; notice to department of change in resources.

Key Provisions: Wyoming provides for postsecondary education for TANF recipients using state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds. A recipient is permitted to pursue one bachelor's degree or one vocational training program, provided that she maintains a C grade point average, enrolls as a full time student with at least 12 credit hours per semester and completes 30 or more credit hours per year in an approved educational program at the University of Wyoming, a Wyoming community college or other school or training center accredited by the state of Wyoming or approved by the Wyoming Department of Family Services.

Her educational program must lead to a specific job and she must have been a state resident for not less than two years prior to starting the education program or be a graduate of a Wyoming high school. Recipients also must complete an assessment to determine if they need postsecondary education for employability and they must agree to relocate after graduation, if necessary, to seek employment in the specified job.

Recipients also must be employed for at least 32 hours per week for 10 or more of the 16 weeks prior to starting classes. This requirement does not apply to recipients who started their degree programs before the effective date of the statute. In addition, recipients must be employed for a minimum of 32 hours per week for at least 10 weeks during the summer break. The Wyoming Department of Family Services may waive these requirements for good cause, such as summer school attendance for at least six hours.

The Department of Family Services may provide support services to recipients as necessary to enable them to achieve economic self sufficiency; these support services are not specifically listed.

Contact: Economic Assistance Division, Wyoming Department of Family Services
Tel: (307) 777-6250
Website: http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/POWER.HTML

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